Vagabond

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 6

English Edition

Vagabond Vol. 6
This graphic novel contains the last half of *VAGABOND* monthly comics #13, and issue #14 and 15 in their entirety.

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THE YAGYU...

#50 Surviving

Vagabond

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I AM YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRŌ, THE YOUNGEST SON OF YOSHIOKA KEMPŌ OF THE EIGHT KYOTO STYLES.

I SEEK A LESSON FROM MASTER YAGYŪ SEKISHŪSAI.

...

SHE'S BEAUTIFUL.

SO YOSHIOKA'S SON IS STILL HERE?

...

YES...

WHY WOULD A HULK LIKE HIM WANT TO FIGHT AN OLD MAN LIKE ME?

BUT I MUST SAY, OTSUI, YOU'VE REALLY IMPROVED YOUR GAME.

SMIRK

GASP!

KLIK

...

HEY!

FWOOP

YOU'RE SO CHILDISH!!

LOSER?

?

OOPS.

YOU'RE SUCH A SORE LOSER!!

HUF.

LNGH...

THUMP THMP

HUF.

HUF.

THUMP THMP

HUF.

URGH...

KRRNCH KRRNCH

ARGH

HUF.

HUF.

URGH

THUMP
THUMP

NNGH...

NNGH.

THUMP
THUMP

HUF.
HUF.

THUMP
THUMP

AARGH...

HUF.
HUF.
HUF.

!!

HUF.

HUF.

...

HUF.

HUF.

MAYBE HE WAS THERE...

HOW DID I END UP HERE...?

WHERE'S JOTARO ...?

I CAN ONLY REMEMBER FRAGMENTS...

...OF THE FIGHT.

HOW DID I SURVIVE...?

WHAT HAPPENED...?

HE FOLLOWED YOU TO THE DUEL AND HASN'T BEEN BACK SINCE.

Zzz

...FOR TEACHING ME ABOUT *LIFE...*

THANK YOU, MUSASHI...

!!

HUF.

HUF.

HUFF.

HUFF.

JOTA...

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

FORTUNATELY, YOU SURVIVED...

WELL...

...MAYBE IT WASN'T SO FORTUNATE.

...NO...

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...

MY APPRENTICESHIP TO YOU WAS BRIEF...

...MASTER ...

I DON'T WANT TO LEARN FROM YOU ANYMORE...

I DON'T NEED TO LEARN HOW TO RUN AWAY FROM A FIGHT.

THUMP
THUMP

HUF.

THUMP
THUMP

HUF.

HUF.

THUMP

HUF.

HUF.

HARGH!

CLAP

THWUNK!

NNGH!

KOF.

HUF.

FWISH

YAHH!

HUF.

HUFF.

THUMP THMP

...

HUF.

HUF.

THUMP THMP

ARGH!!

KRICH

HUF.

KRICH

HUF.

FWICH

ARGH!

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

YAHH!

THOK

FWOOSH

ARGH!

YAHH!

FOOSH

!!

YUCK!
IT'S READY!
SNIF SNIF

INSHLIN WASTED TOO MANY BLOWS.

FWUP

FWUP

SHWIP

IF HE HAD TO HIT YOU SO MANY TIMES...

...HE'S STILL GOT A LONG WAY TO GO.

OLD MAN, ARE YOU--?

FICH FICH

I'M HOZOIN INEI.

HMMM...

I'M NOTHING.

I AM SO SMALL.

I AM INVINCIBLE!!

I COULD KILL YOU WITH THIS STICK.

DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE AS STRONG AS HŌZŌIN INEI?

THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER OF HŌZŌIN...

I'M GOING TO BEAT YOU!

AAAHH!

FWISH

#31 Lying Low

...

FISH

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

MNCH

MNCH

MNCH

KTNK

...

HUF.

HUF.

SNIF

"I AM STRONG."

WAS I JUST FOOLING MYSELF?

MY "STRENGTH"...
WAS IT JUST AN
ILLUSION?

I
WASN'T
READY
TO DIE

I'M ACTING THE SAME WAY...

...I'M NO DIFFERENT FROM THAT BANDIT.

I HAVENT MADE ANY PROGRESS AT ALL

KRNCH
KRNCH

...

EH?

SLAM!!

YOU'RE HOZOIN INEI...

INSHUN'S MASTER.

THEREFORE, I'M YOUR ENEMY...BUT HERE YOU ARE...

I DON'T GET IT...

HMM...

HRMPH.

FWUP

I WONDER WHETHER ONE COULD EVEN CONSIDER YOU AN ENEMY...

HMPH..

THAT'S TRUE. I DIDN'T EVEN GET ONE BLOW IN.

NONE WHO HAVE FACED HIM HAVE EVER BEEN A THREAT TO HIS LIFE.

HRMPH.

THIS IS THE FINAL DILEMMA THAT MY DISCIPLE INSHUN MUST OVERCOME.

HAVING SPENT MOST OF HIS LIFE ■ THE WILDERNESS, MUSASHI'S TOUGH BODY RECOVERED QUICKLY.

BUT AS HIS WOUNDS HEALED, HE GREW MORE AND MORE DISAPPOINTED WITH HIMSELF.

HE'S A GENIUS.

YET, BECAUSE OF THIS...

THE DISCIPLINE OF BODY AND SOUL...

INSHUN'S PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE AND TECHNIQUE ARE INFALLIBLE.

HE KNOWS NOT THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SOUL.

...

SHLRP

MNCH

MNCH

MNCH

...THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT ALLOW THE SOUL TO GROW AND MATURE...

OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES...

...AND AT TIMES EVEN RISKING ONE'S LIFE...

KOFF!

HAK!

KOFF!

!!

INSHUN REALIZES THIS...

HRMPH

URGH...

TAKE IT EASY. YOUR WOUNDS HAVEN'T HEALED YET.

BUT BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT GENIUS...

...ONLY INSHUN'S OPPONENTS' LIVES ARE EVER AT RISK.

THUMP
THMP

HUF.

THUMP
THMP

INSHUN...!!

HUF.

THUMP
THMP

HUF.

May 16th

Dear Takezō...

Everyone knows the great Yagyū Sekishūsai Muneyoshi of the Shinkage Style of swordsmanship.

The truth is he's very childish and a real sore loser.

CONTINUE? ...BUT YOU LOST, SIR!

NO, I DIDN'T.

OH, YES YOU DID!

SHALL WE CONTINUE OUR GAME FROM YESTERDAY?

OTSU...

YES?

NOW LET'S CONTINUE!!

BY STARTING OVER.

THE GAME NEVER ENDED!!

Pretty funny, huh, Takezō?

MNCH

MNCH

MNCH

MNCH

MNCH

MNCH

MNCH

MNCH

MNCH

...

MNCH

WANT MORE?

YES, PLEASE.

NO MATTER HOW STRONG YOU ARE. A FIGHT TO THE DEATH IS A TERRIFYING ORDEAL

EVEN FOR ME.

...AND KEEP IT AT BAY.

BUT THERE IS A WAY TO FACE THAT FEAR...

KRICH

KRUSH

...!!

BUT ONLY THE TRULY STRONG CAN SUCCEED IN DOING SO.

HRMPH

SO HE STILL HAS MUCH TO LEARN...

INSHUN HAS NEVER KNOWN "FEAR."

FWIP

MUSASHI ...

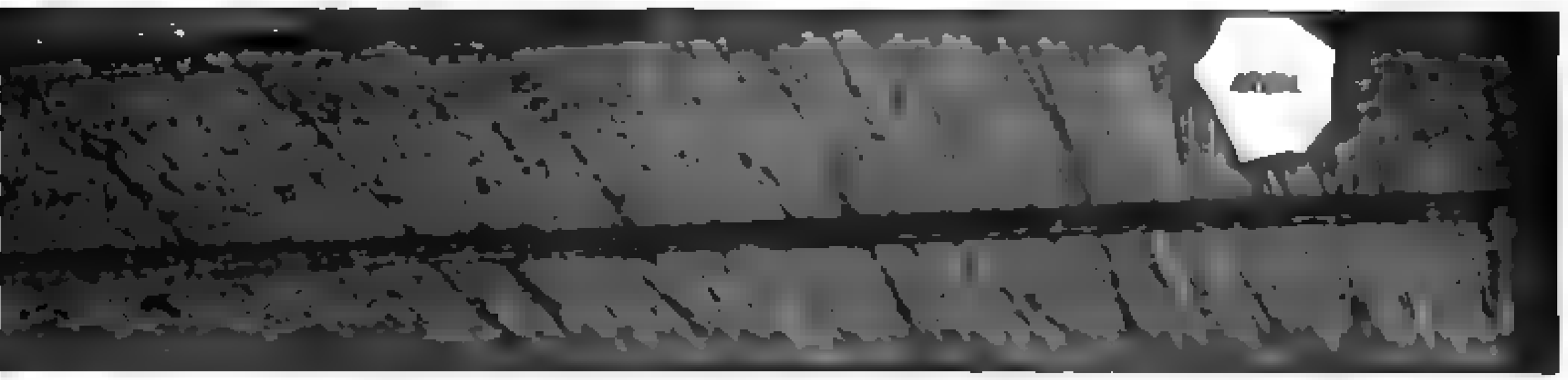
THE YOUNG HEAL SO QUICKLY...

WILL *YOU* TEACH INSHUN THE MEANING OF "FEAR"...?

IF IT'S ALL RIGHT FOR ME TO KILL HIM.

Vagabond

(GOOD NIGHT, TAKEZO.)



FWOOSH
AHH!!

THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP

IT MAY HEAL YOUR INJURIES...

TIME...

BUT YOUR FEAR, THAT'S BEEN CARVED INTO YOUR SOUL

DAWN !!!!

DAWN

DAWN

#52

Lying Low II

IT'S GETTING HOT...

MEOWL...

HRMPH...

INTERRUPTING MY PLOWING, EH?

PLEASE, YOU MUST TRAIN ME!

MASTER INEI...

THERE'S NO WAY I CAN JUST LET IT GO.

NO WAY!

INSHUN GAVE ME SUCH A BEATING...

I CAN'T LET IT END LIKE THIS.

YOU USUALLY CALL ME "OLD MAN" ...

...

WHAT'S THIS "MASTER" BUSINESS?

MASTER IN'EI!!

PLEASE, OLD MAN!!

HMM...

PHEW...

GETTING TIRED

...

KRICH

...TRAINING WITH ME...

IT WON'T BE EASY...

KRICH

KRICH

KRICH

THE TOUGHER THE TRAINING, THE BETTER!

HMPH...

KRICH

KRICH

KRICH

KRICH

FSSSH

FSSSHH

AND YOU'RE ASKING *ME*, INSHUN'S MASTER, TO TRAIN YOU?

HRUMPH

HUMPH!

YOU'RE AN ODD FELLOW.

TO BEAT INSHUN.

IF YOU WISH TO TRAIN, YOU MUST HAVE A GOAL.

TELL ME, MUSASHI, WHAT IS *YOURS*?

MUSASHI, IN ORDER TO DEFEAT INSHUN...

...YOU MUST DO SOMETHING WITH WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE...

SSS

DO SOMETHING WITH WHAT I ALREADY HAVE...?

!!

AND YOU NEVER WILL... NOT UNTIL YOU'RE WILLING TO UNDERSTAND HOW YOU LOST.

HRMPH!

YOU DON'T HAVE A CLUE.

HOW I LOST...?

IT WAS A STRATEGIC RETREAT.

I'M STILL ALIVE!!

I DIDN'T LOSE!!

IT'S NOT OVER YET.

HRMPH!

FSH

WELL, AT LEAST YOU'VE RECOVERED ENOUGH TO *ACT* STRONG.

Flip

WHAT WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU DEFEAT INSHUN?

INSHUN...!

FWOOSH

!!

YAH!!

FWOOSH

HRMPH ...

FWOOSH

YAH!!

AHGH!

OLD MAN!!

ARGH!

TACK

YAH!

!!

SPISSH

FSSSSH

FSSSSH

FSSSSH

UH
OH

YOU ALMOST DIED.

HUMPH!

...

HUMPH!

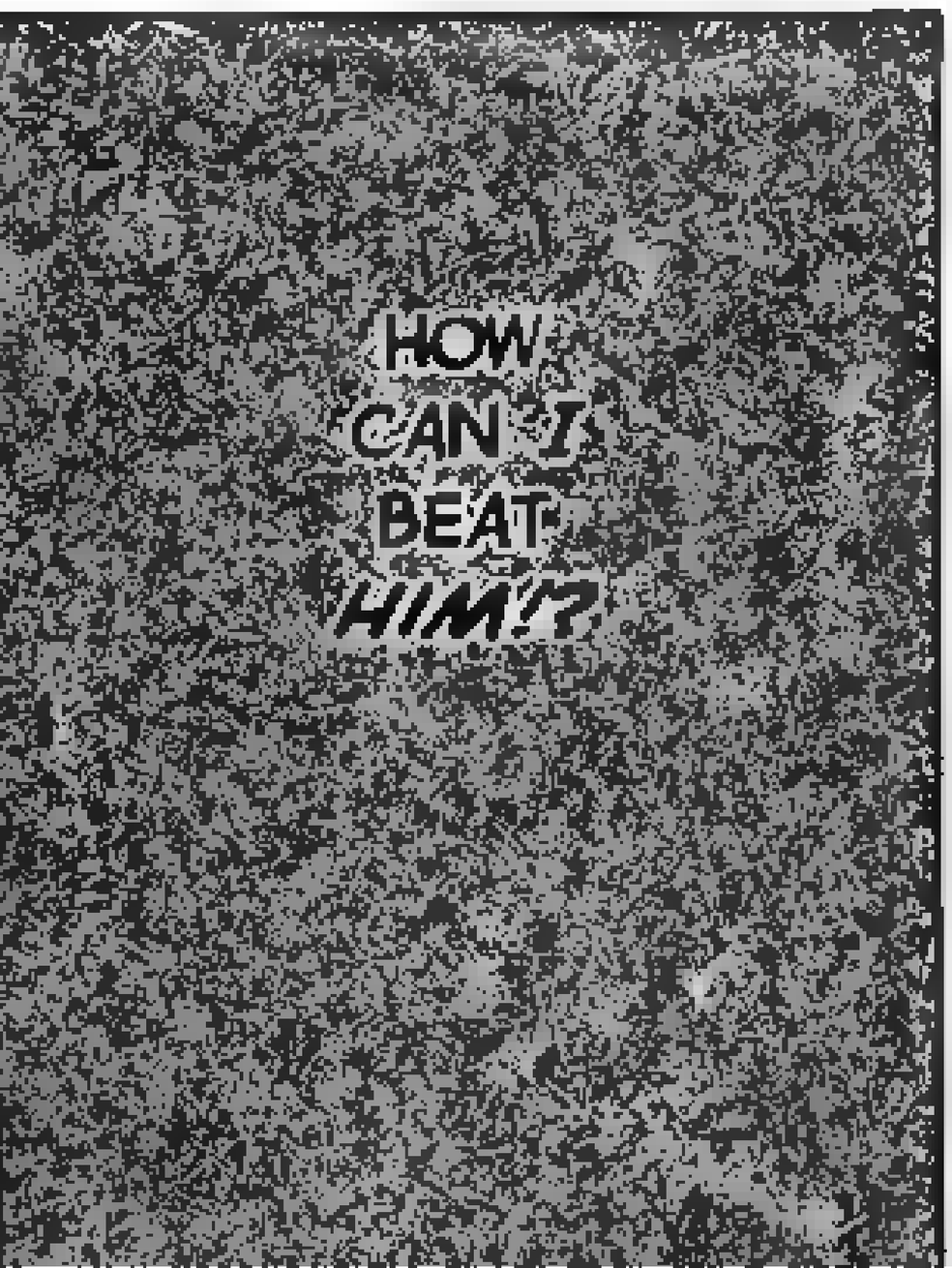
HUF

HUF

HUF

HOW DID I BECOME SUCH A COWARD?

DAMN IT!!
DAMN!
DAMN!


HOW CAN I BEAT HIM!?

I'M SCARED.
I'M SCARED OF INSHUN.

FSSS

SH

DESIRE...

UNEASE

WEAK-NESS...

ESH

HRMPH!

SINCE ANCIENT TIMES, PEOPLE HAVE MEDITATED UNDER RAGING WATERFALLS TO RID THEMSELVES OF SUCH THOUGHTS.

FEAR...

...!!

FISH

BY THE TIME YOU RISE UP OUT OF THE FALLS...

...YOU SHALL BECOME TRULY AWARE

...

...

THUD

!!

...THAT IT'S NOT GOING TO DO ANY GOOD.

YOU ALMOST DIED.

...

WEEZ.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF

HUF

FSSSSSSSSHHHH

...

WHY DID WE COME OUT HERE, ANYWAY!?

HM? YOU'RE NOT COMING BACK WITH ME.

FWIP

HEY!!

HRMPH. TIME TO GO HOME, BEFORE THE SUN SETS.

...NOT TO MENTION BEASTS.

IF YOU'RE HUNGRY, THERE'S PLENTY OF FISH AND BIRDS OUT HERE...

YOU ARE STAYING HERE.

!! !!!

THE MOUNTAINS... THAT'S WHERE YOU CAME FROM...

AND AREN'T THE MOUNTAINS THE ONLY TEACHER YOU'VE EVER HAD?

!!

HRMPH —

HOW TO DEAL WITH YOUR FEAR...

THE ANSWER TO THAT, YOU MAY FIND OUT HERE.

TUGG

I WILL DEFEAT YOU!..

INSOLENT OF HOZONI...

FLICH

FLICH

I WILL!!

IT'S NOT OVER YET.

EEP

EEP

EEP

EEP

EEP

#53 Journey

FORGIVE ME...

AND AREN'T THE MOUNTAINS THE ONLY TEACHER YOU'VE EVER HAD?

THE MOUNTAINS... THAT'S WHERE YOU CAME FROM...

KRUNCH

KRUNCH

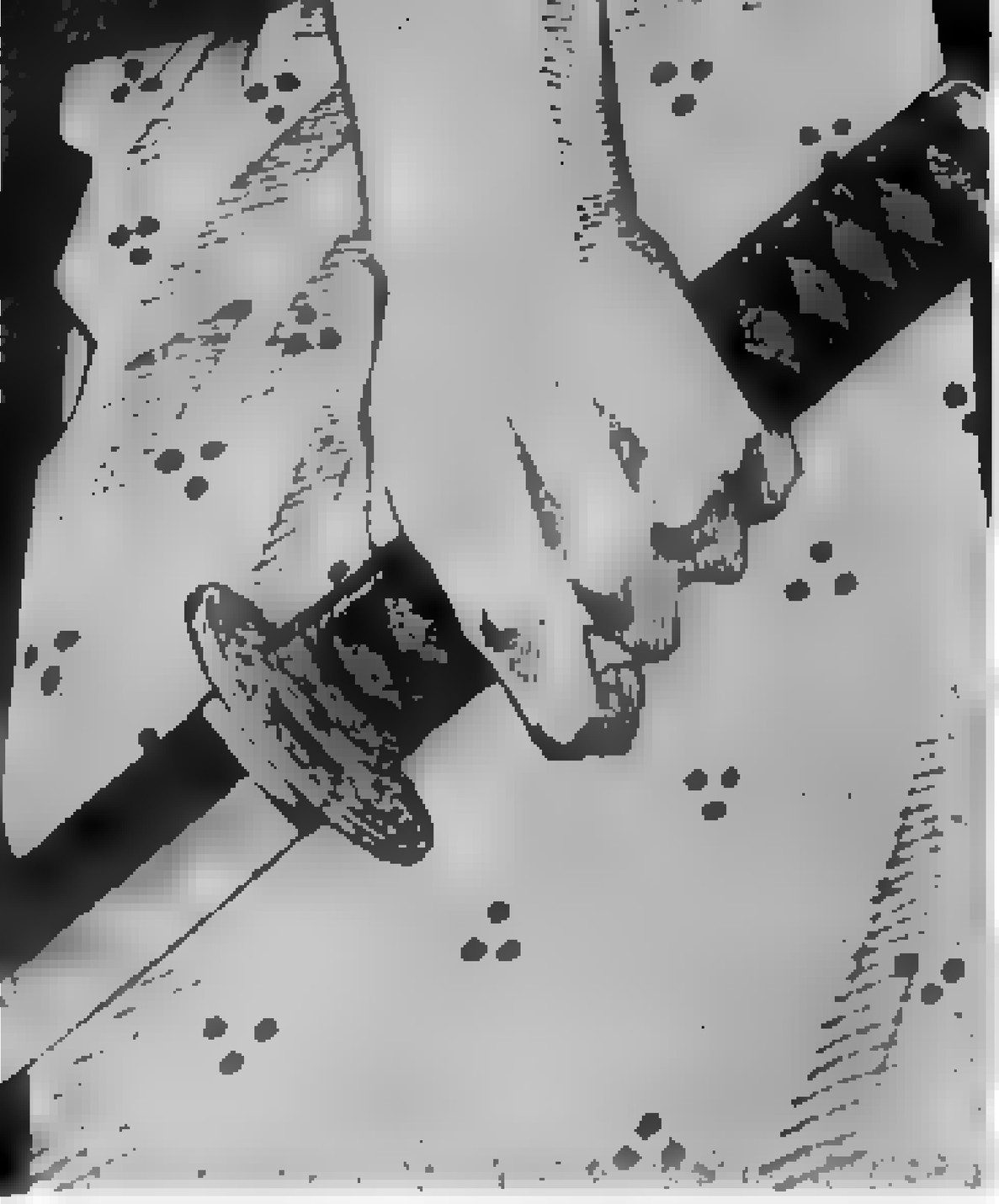
CHOMP

CHOMP

WHERE I CAME FROM...

FWUMP

HOME...



!!

WHAT DO *YOU* KNOW ABOUT *ME?*

I KNOW *EVERYTHING* ABOUT YOU.

THUP

AH!

FWIP

YOU'LL *NEVER* BEAT ME.

...ABOUT THE MAN I CALL MY FATHER...

I'VE NEVER KNOWN MUCH...

...

NOTHING AT ALL...

I KNOW *NOTHING* ABOUT HIM

PHEW.

SLISH

SLISH

SLISH

NOTHING...

I'D NEVER EVEN SEEN HIM BEFORE.

WHAT DID I KNOW ABOUT INSHUN?

...FOR AMBITION'S SAKE

I JUST CHARGED IN BLINDLY...

ONCE I GET INTO A FIGHT, I THINK I'LL MANAGE TO WIN SOMEHOW...

I'M OVERCONFIDENT ABOUT MY STRENGTH...

I HAVE NO STYLE.

IMMATURE...

UGLY ARROGANCE

HUF.

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...!!!

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

INEXCUSABLE

HRMPH

...

HM...

YOU WERE SO OVERCONFIDENT AND RECKLESS.

YOUR FIRST DEFEAT MUST HAVE BEEN ALL THE MORE SHOCKING TO YOU.

I DON'T BLAME YOU.

I DON'T BLAME YOU AT ALL...

I DON'T BLAME YOU FOR RUNNING AWAY FROM YOUR DEFEAT AND YOUR LONELINESS...

YOU'RE ONLY HUMAN.

HRMPH

...!!

I'M GOING TO KILL INSHUN!!

BRR BRR...

ぶるぶる

WATERFALL'S NOT SO BAD AFTER ALL, OLD MAN.

FSSSSSSH

WASHES AWAY ALL YOUR DISTRACTIONS.

TELL ME... HOW DO YOU PLAN ON MASTERING YOUR FEAR?

SO IT *DID* HELP YOU FIND SOME ANSWERS...

SMIRK

I DIDN'T LOSE

IT WAS JUST A STEP TOWARDS VICTORY!

...

SO YOU'RE TRYING TO UNDERSTAND HOW YOU LOST.

I NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT INSHUN

FSSH

TRAIN ME, OLD MAN!!

FWISH

FP

ONCE YOU *KNOW* INSHUN...

...WILL YOU STILL BE ABLE TO FACE HIM?

FP

!!

THUMP

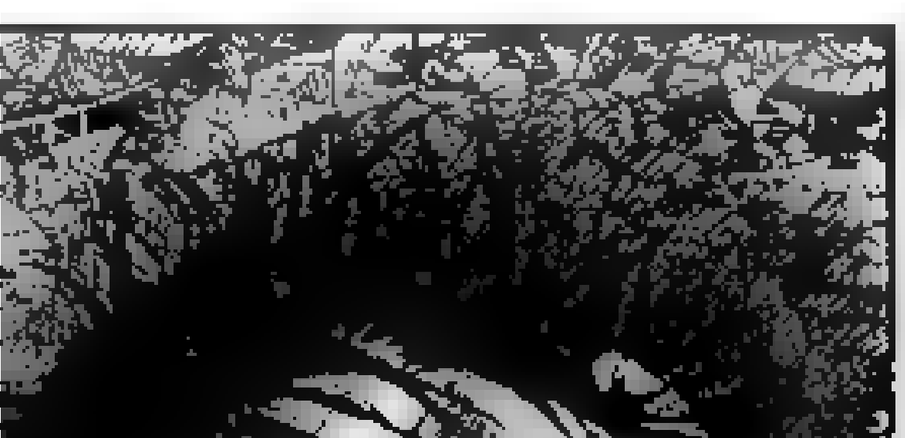
...

...

I CAN'T MOVE FORWARD...

KRICH

...UNLESS I BEAT HIM.



OR AM I JUST FALLING APART?

AM I MAKING ANY PROGRESS AT ALL?

WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING HERE...?

TELL ME IT'S GOING TO BE OKAY...

Vagabond

(ZZZ... TELL ME IT'S GOING TO BE OKAY...)

YOU'RE HERE.

HRMPH.

HRMPH.

I'M GOING TO SEE THROUGH THAT SPEAR OF YOURS, OLD MAN.

TODAY'S THE DAY...

#54 | Vision

GLLIG.

GLLIG
GLLIG.

URGH..

HA HA HA

NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

AND I'M JUST AN OLD MAN WHO RETIRED A LONG TIME AGO.

FWIP

FICH

FICH

KRAKKL

KRAKKL

KRAKKL

HRMPH

THE GREAT INEI...

HMPH

DAMN THAT OLD MAN

CHOMP

I DON'T HAVE THE VISION

I CAN'T SEE THROUGH IT...

...THAT SPEAR MOVEMENT.

SHIK

SHIK

ONCE YOUR HEART IS PREOCCUPIED

_YOUR SWORD WILL NOT BE TRUE.

TAKUAN...

THEN YOU WILL DIE.

WHAT WENT WRONG...?

WHAT COULD HAVE DISTRACTED ME...?

...

PRE-
OCCUPIED
WITH A
SINGLE TREE,
YOU'LL MISS
THE ENTIRE
FOREST.

PREOCCUPIED
WITH A
SINGLE LEAF...

...YOU
WON'T
SEE THE
TREE.

...TO
REALLY
SEE INSHUN
IN THAT
FIGHT?

DID I
HAVE
THE
VISION...

FOOL!

COWARD!

I WAS DISTRACTED...

...BY HIS STARE

I WAS DISTRACTED FROM THE VERY BEGINNING

TUNK

...BY HIS STANCE...

I WAS PREOCCUPIED WITH THE THOUGHT OF MY OWN STRENGTH...

AND I WAS DISTRACTED BY ONE MORE THING...

THERE'S NO WAY I COULD'VE "SEEN" MY OPPONENT...

KRICH

KRICH

GLUG

GLUG

GLUG

OLD MAN...

HMM...

NEXT TIME YOU COME, BRING ME SOME SALT...

MAYBE I'LL WAIT UNTIL IT'S HATCHED.

NO...IT MIGHT NOT BE THERE TOMORROW.

AN EGG...

!!

KRICH

INSHUN!?

THMP
THMP

THMP
THMP

IS HE LOOKING FOR ME?

...

THAT IS WHAT IT MEANS TO TRULY "SEE"

SEE EVERYTHING IN ITS ENTIRETY...

...EFFORTLESSLY.

THIS TIME, REALLY *LOOK* AT HIM.

LOOK AT HIM...

LOOK!!

...

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

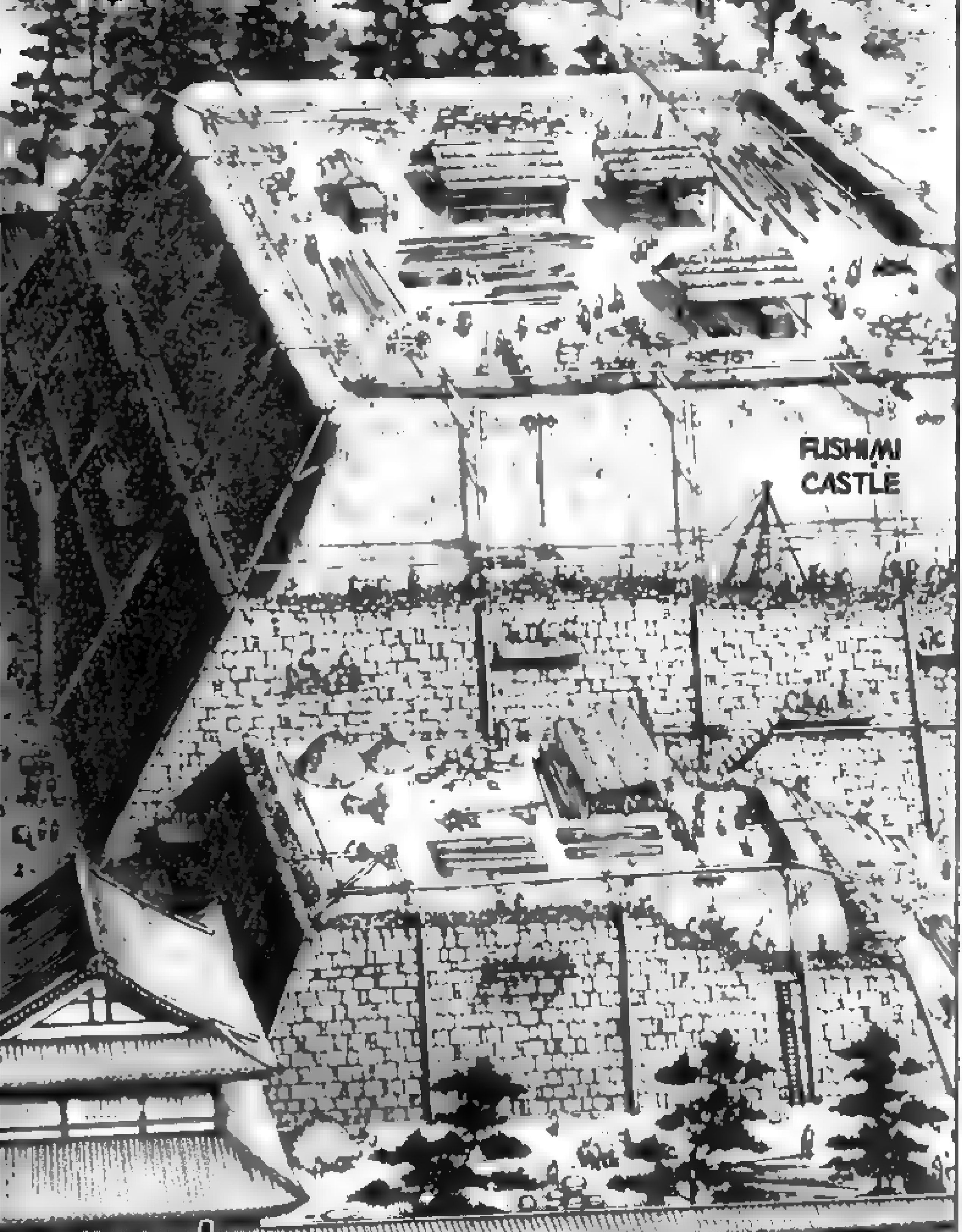
HUF.

HUF.

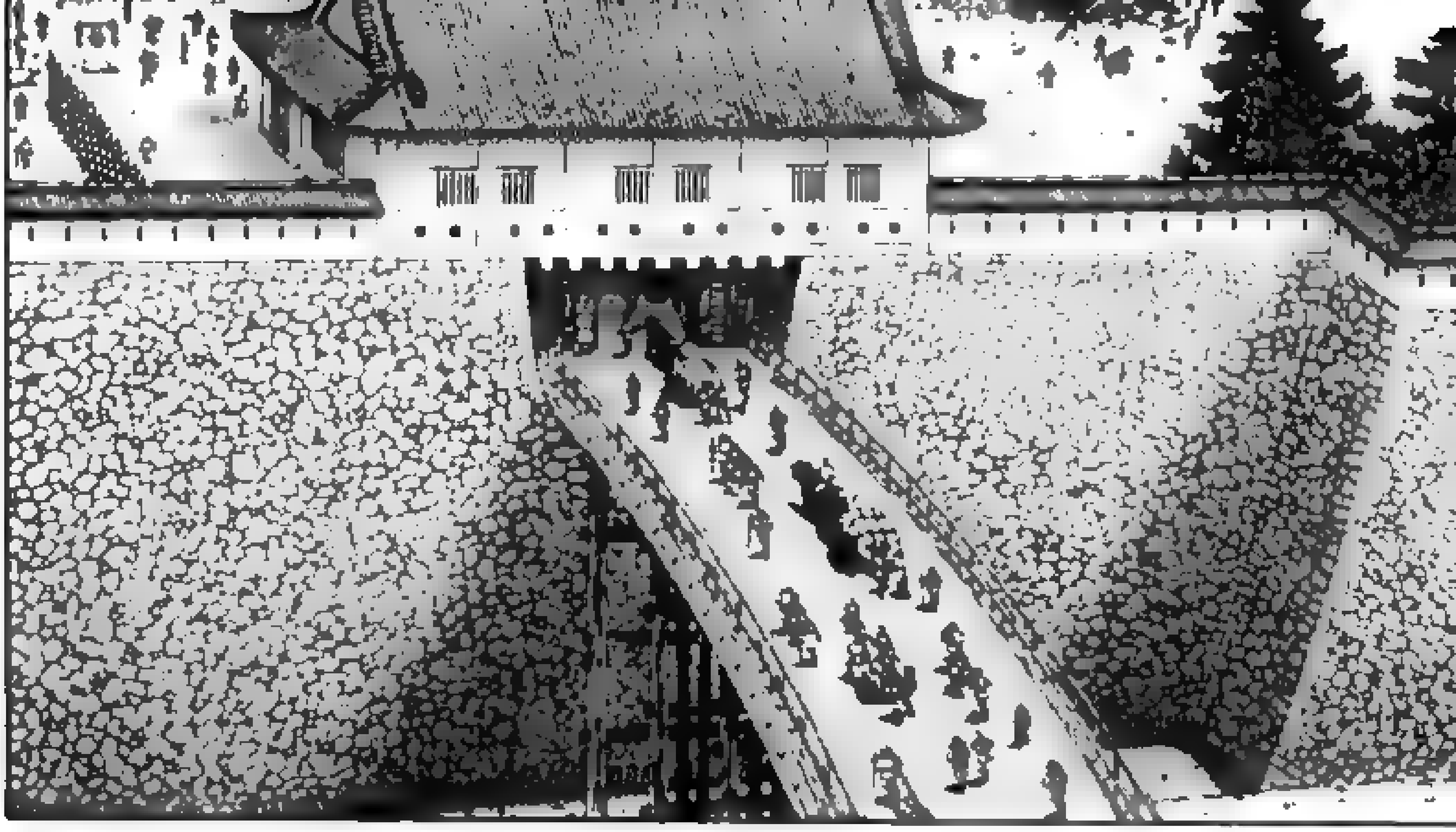
...

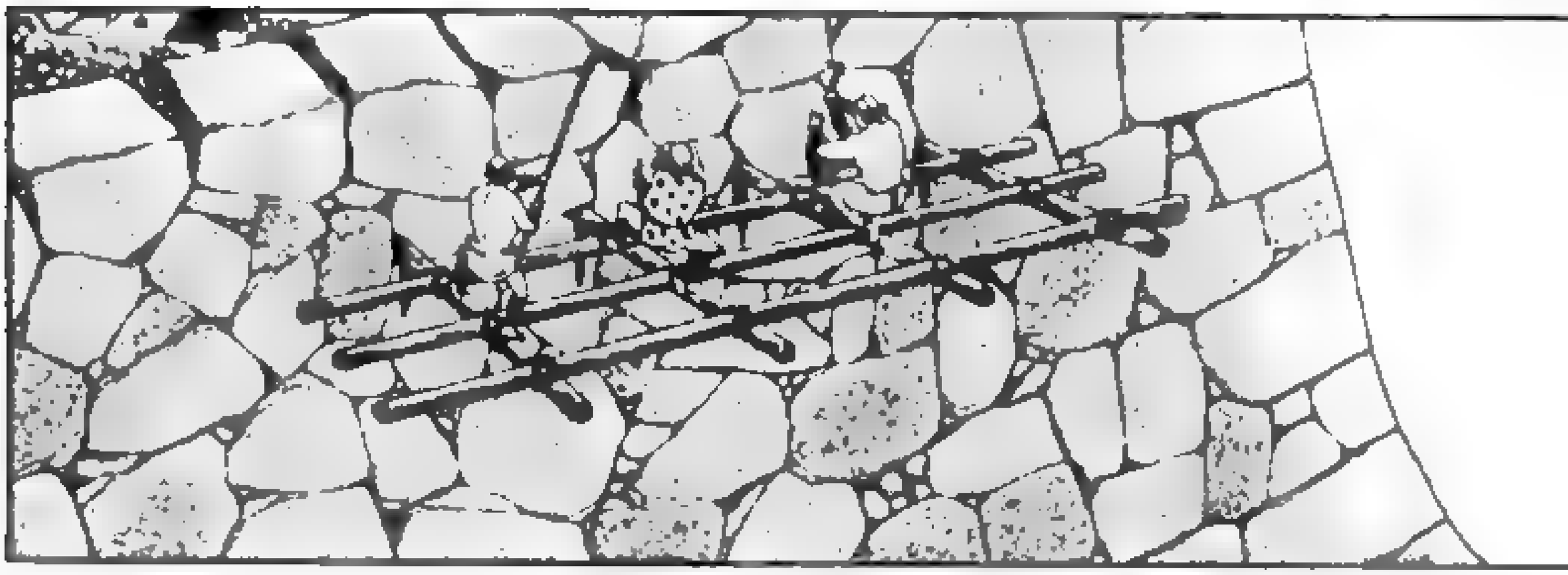
Vagabond

(DAMN! WHAT'S THAT GUY DOING HERE!?)



#55 The Decision of a Formerly Kept Man





I-I CAN'T HELP IT...
KOFF.

HEY!
IT'S TOO EARLY FOR A BREAK!

HAK.
HAK.

I'M NOT WELL...

HMM...

YOU *ARE* LOOKING KIND OF PALE!

QUIT SLACKING OFF!

HEY, MATAHACHI!

WATER-MELONS!

WATER-MELONS!

I JUST CAN'T TAKE THIS HEAT.

I'LL...

I'LL BE OKAY...

COULDN'T WE TAKE A LITTLE BREAK IN THE AFTERNOON...?

I'LL TAKE ONE...

WATER-MELONS HERE!

I FEEL BAD FOR EVERYONE...

Y-YOU GUYS SHARE THIS...

HM...

A TACTFUL BRIBE, EH? HEH HEH...

YOU'RE SPINELESS AND WEAK.

...

TYRAK

MY LIFE WOULD BE THE ENVY OF EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE.

RIGHT NOW, I SHOULD BE THE HEAD OF THE HONIDEN FAMILY, MARRIED TO THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE VILLAGE.

DAMN...!!

IF ONLY I HADN'T MET *HER*.

I'M ONLY 22! IT'S NOT TOO LATE!!

I'M GOING TO START ALL OVER AGAIN!!

I LEFT OKŌ AND I QUIT DRINKING.

BUT THAT'S ALL IN THE PAST...

IS THAT RIGHT!?

I HEARD HE WAS AN EQUAL MATCH TO DENCHICHIRO YOSHIOKA...!!

WHAT AN AMAZING FIGHTER.

BUT WHO IS HE?

AND THEY SAY HE'S ONLY ABOUT 20 YEARS OLD!!

FIVE YEARS...

...TAKEZO.

MIYAMOTO ...

...MUSASHI.

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!!

YOU JUST WAIT AND SEE!!

IN FIVE YEARS, I'LL SURPASS YOU!!

HAK.

I'M SO PATHETIC...

I FINALLY FIND A JOB BUT I CAN'T KEEP UP...

ALL RIGHT.

COME ON

SORRY, EVERY-ONE.

BREAK TIME'S OVER!!

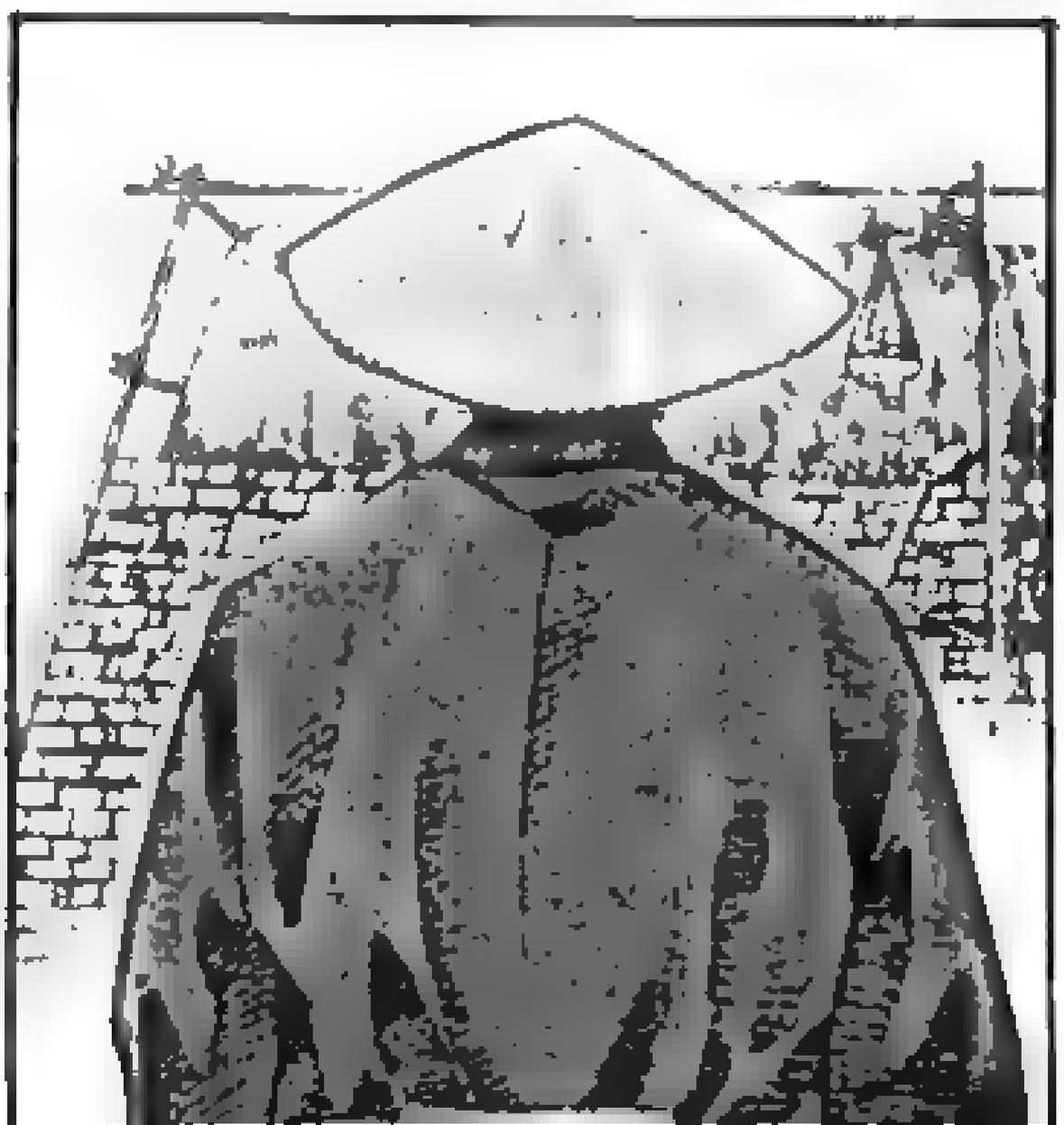
BACK TO WORK!!

EVER SINCE I WAS 17...

...I'VE LIVED OFF OF OKÔ'S EARNINGS FOR FIVE YEARS...

WHAT AM I ..!?

NO! I DON'T MISS HER!



THIS HEAT IS TOO MUCH FOR--

UGH!

YOU LOOK AWFUL, WHAT'S WRONG?

HMM... ?

HERE'S SOME MEDICINE.

WRECH! KOFF KOF!

YES, THIS HEAT WAVE IS AWFUL...

...

TH-THANK YOU VERY MUCH, SIR.

YOU SHOULD REST THERE FOR A WHILE LONGER...

IT'LL TAKE EFFECT SOON.

TOSS A PEBBLE TO SIGNAL ME.

AND PERHAPS YOU CAN DO *ME* A FAVOR... GIVE ME A WARNING IF SOMEONE COMES AROUND.

I'M COUNTING ON YOU...

GASP!

OH NO!

HEY...

I'M SORRY...

I'M SO SORRY...

I'M AN ERRANT SAMURAI AND SCHOLAR.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH STUDYING GEOGRAPHY AND CONSTRUCTION FOR MY OWN EDIFICATION!?

A TOYOTOMI SPY!!

FWIP

!?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?

HEY, WHAT'S GOING ON?

AN ENEMY SPY!

WHAT, FROM OSAKA!?

THE BASTARD!!

LET'S KILL HIM!!

WELL LEAVE HIM LIKE THIS UNTIL THE AUTHORITIES COME.

YOU KEEP WATCH OVER HIM.

DON'T WORRY IF HE ENDS UP DYING.

BZZ.

BZZ

HE MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE A SKILLED SWORDSMAN...

BUT HE DID TAKE FIVE MEN DOWN WITH HIM...

HE'S DEAD...

I, MYSELF, HAVE CUT DOWN FOUR BANDITS...

LIFE IS TOO FLEETING...

AN ERRANT SAMURAI...

AND ONLY ONE OUT OF TEN-THOUSAND...

...CAN HAVE ANY HOPE OF SUCCEEDING...

LEAVING YOUR HOME, YOUR PARENTS...

...ALL FOR THE SAKE OF AMBITION, GOING THROUGH HARDSHIP AND DIFFICULT TRAINING...

THE REST END UP LIKE THIS...

FWICH!!

FWICH

FWISH

PLEASE, FORGIVE ME!!

PLEASE!!

I'M SORRY !!

I'M--

GASP!

PLE--

PLEASE...

HERE'S SOME MEDI-CINE.

YOU SHOWED ME KINDNESS. BUT THERE'S NOT MUCH I CAN DO FOR YOU NOW...

NOW HE'S REALLY DEAD.

...

"PLEASE"...?

KRICH

KRICH

!!

THAT'S THE LEAST I COULD DO...

HMM. LET'S SEE...

MAYBE I CAN DELIVER A KEEPSAKE TO YOUR PARENTS.

...

!!

...

WHAT SHOULD I DO...?

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HM...?

TMP

WHAT'S THIS?

(SASAKI KOJIRŌ HAS MASTERED THE FOLLOWING SECRET METHODS OF THE CHŪJŌ STYLE OF SWORDSMANSHIP...)

Vagabond

A CERTIFICATE

...OF SWORDSMANSHIP...!?

SO HE WAS SKILLED ENOUGH TO RECEIVE A CERTIFICATE IN THE CHIJŌ STYLE OF SWORDSMANSHIP...

I *KNEW* HE WAS FORMIDABLE...

THIS CERTIFICATE ■ PROOF OF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

I VOW TO DELIVER IT TO YOUR PARENTS.

TO BE KILLED OFF LIKE THAT...

IT'S JUST HORRIBLE

HIS NAME WAS SASAKI KOJIRŌ.

BUT I SHOULD LEAVE HERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

WOULDN'T WANT TO BE ARRESTED AS A THIEF.

AND THERE WAS THAT FIRE AT THE YOSHIOKA DOJO...

GOT TO STAY OUT OF TROUBLE.

...

FWIP

I'LL...

I'LL DELIVER TAWS TO HIS PARENTS, AS WELL!!

KLNK

WHOA!

!

FWIP

MAYBE THERE'S SOME OTHER CLUES HERE...

I NEED TO FIND OUT WHERE HE'S FROM...

#56 Osaka

I'M WASTING MY TIME.

I DON'T HAVE ANY CLUES AND I'M JUST WALKING AROUND AIMLESSLY.

DAMN, I'M EXHAUSTED.

AND I'M STARVING ...

WELCOME

I'M WASTING MY TIME.

HM? KANEMAKI JISAI?

THE MASTER OF THE SWORD SCHOOL SHOULD KNOW HIS DISCIPLE'S HOME-TOWN

I HAVE TO FIND KANEMAKI JISAI...

YOU LOOK AWFUL.

ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT ANYTHING?

ARE YOU BROKE?

I HAVEN'T HAD ANYTHING TO EAT SINCE YESTERDAY...

I KNEW IT...

CAN HE REALLY BE THAT REPUTABLE?

NO ONE KNOWS A THING ABOUT HIM.

HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE THE REPUTABLE MASTER OF THE TODA SEIGEN VARIATION OF THE CHŪJŌ STYLE

EVER HEARD OF HIM?

CAN'T SAY THAT I HAVE

...?

WELL, NOT REALLY...

IT'S NO CRIME FOR ME TO USE A BIT OF HIS FUNDS.

IT'S JUST A BOWL OF NOODLES.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

NO! THIS IS A TRAVEL EXPENSE.

I NEED IT TO DELIVER THAT MAN'S POSSESSIONS TO HIS HOME.

I'M SO FULL.

PHEW!

I ATE A MEAL WITH SOMEONE ELSE'S MONEY.

DAMN...

I CONTINUED TO SEEK HIM OUT UNTIL I HEARD THAT HE RETIRED TO A REMOTE VILLAGE, TO PASS HIS OLD AGE IN HERMETIC OBSCURITY.

I, TOO, WANTED TO WITNESS HIS SWORDSMANSHIP, FIRSTHAND...

IF IT'S KANEMAKI JISAI YOU'RE LOOKING FOR...

I THINK YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME...

HUH?

HE'S THE GRANDSON OF TODA SEIGEN. PERHAPS HE'LL HAVE SOME INFORMATION.

BUT IF YOU STILL WISH TO FIND HIM...

...I SUGGEST YOU GO TO OSAKA CASTLE AND FIND A MAN NAMED TODA MONDONOSHŌ.

OSAKA!

OSAKA
CASTLE...

WHUMP

PHEW! I'M EXHAUSTED ...

YES, OF COURSE..

TODA MONDONOSHO ...

FWOH

I KEEP HAVING TO TRAVEL FARTHER AND FARTHER....

E--

ECHIZEN ...!?

WHO USED TO TEACH SOME OF THE SAMURAI IN THE CASTLE

THE GRANDSON OF TODA SEIGEN...

IF YOU WANT TO FIND OUT ABOUT KANEMAKI JISAI THEN YOU MIGHT BE BETTER OFF LOOKING FOR ITO ITTOSAI

HE'S THE FOUNDER OF THE ITTO RYU STYLE OF SWORDSMANSHIP. EVEN I KNOW THAT.

WHY WOULD I WANT TO DO THAT?

USED TO TEACH?

THAT'S RIGHT. HE RETURNED TO ECHIZEN SEVERAL YEARS AGO.

!!
!!!!!

YOU'RE LOOKING FOR HIM AND YOU DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT?

ITTŌSAI STUDIED UNDER KANEMAKI JISAI.

WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO...?

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...

NO POINT IN RUSHING THOUGH...

I'M NEVER GOING TO FIND ANY OF THEM.

HOWEVER....

ITŌ ITTŌSAI WAS LAST KNOWN TO HAVE RETIRED IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF SHIRAKAWA.

BUT FROM THERE, HE DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE.

ZZZ

ZZZ

REALLY!?

TAKE A LOOK FOR YOURSELF.

AND THEY'RE GOING TO DISPLAY THEIR LOYALTY TO HIDEYOSHI

APPARENTLY, OVER SEVEN HUNDRED RONIN WITH THAT CONVICTION HAVE GATHERED HERE.

TOKUGAWA MIGHT RULE THE COUNTRY NOW...

BUT THEY SAY OSAKA CASTLE IS SECRETLY ASSEMBLING A TROOP OF RONIN...

THEY'RE PREPARING FOR BATTLE...

SURE ARE A LOT OF RONIN IN OSAKA.

WELL, THAT'S BECAUSE THERE'S A DEMAND FOR THEM HERE.

KRICH

KRICH

KRICH

THAT'S THE CHIEF OF THE KYŌBASHI ENTRANCE TO OSAKA CASTLE.

I WAS LUGGING STONES AT FUSHIMI CASTLE JUST THE OTHER DAY...

THAT'S NO DIFFERENT FROM ME!

REALLY ...!?

WHEN THEY WERE DREDGING THE JUNKEI MOAT, HE WAS JUST ANOTHER RŌNIN...

...HAULING DIRT.

I CAN DO IT!!

THIS IS MY CHANCE TO MAKE SOMETHING OF MYSELF.

THIS IS IT...!!

FWICH

KLINK

BUT THERE'S STILL A LOT LEFT...

COME AGAIN, SIR!

SORRY, KOJIRO...I SPENT SOME MORE OF YOUR MONEY.

THINGS ARE JUST BEGINNING FOR ME.

MY LUCK IS FINALLY CHANGING!!

FWIP

AH, DOESN'T MATTER. A MAN WITH AMBITION HAS TO HAVE A DRINK, EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE.

DELICIOUS!

FIP

PHEW.

HEY, DIDN'T I QUIT DRINKING ...?

FWIP

...

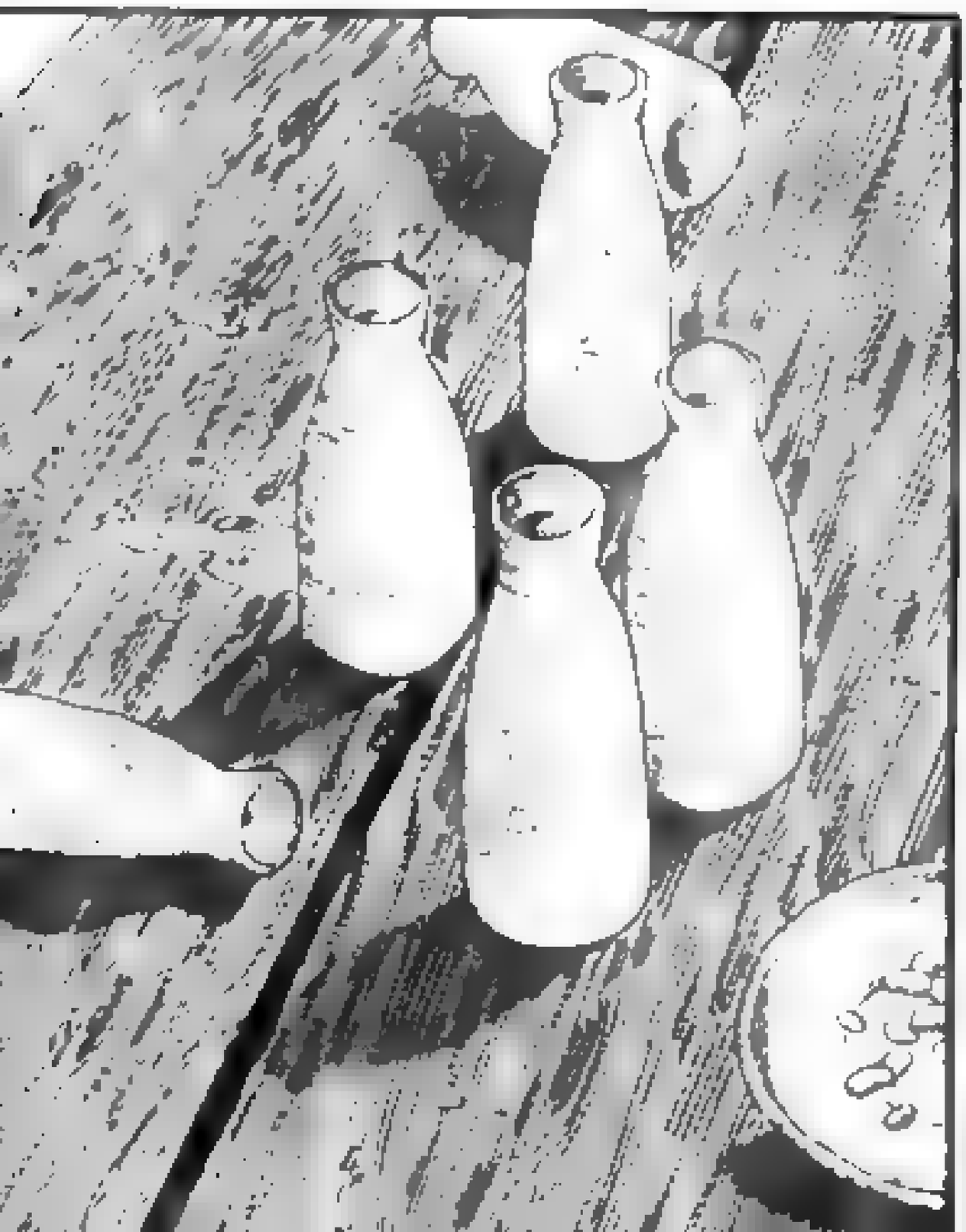
SMIRK

YOU DRINK YOUR SAKE WITH SUCH RELISH...

PARDON MY RUDENESS!

CAN I HELP YOU?

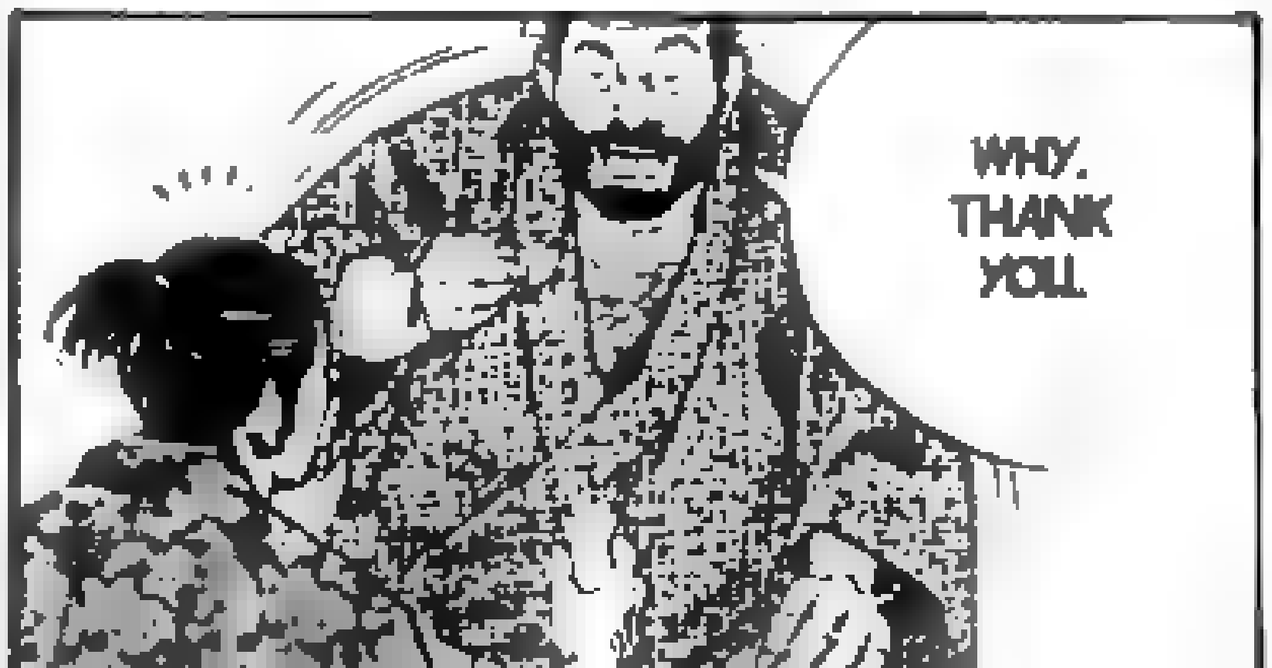
HUH ...?



HOW ABOUT JOINING ME FOR A DRINK?

...WHILE YOU WAIT FOR YOURS?

HEY. WAITER! WHERE'S *MY* BOTTLE!?



WHY. THANK YOU.

HE MUST BE A RONIN, TOO...

HE SURE CAN DRINK A LOT

NOW, THIS IS A BOLD MAN.

TAKEZO COULDN'T DRINK AT ALL.

HUH? I DRANK TOO MUCH.

YOU'LL SEE, TAKEZO!!

IN OSAKA!!

I WONDER IF HE'S STILL IN NARA...?

I'LL MAKE A NAME FOR MYSELF HERE

...IF THERE WAS A WAR RIGHT NOW, WHICH SIDE WOULD YOU FIGHT ON?

HEY...

THAT DAMN IEYASU!!

FWIP

HE HAS THE NERVE TO IGNORE HIDEYORI...

HE CALLS HIMSELF OGOSHO--THE GREAT LEADER! HE'S A COLD CONNIVING BASTARD.

OSAKA...

AND SO WHAT FIEF ARE YOU FROM?

OH, HOW RUDE OF ME... PLEASE ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF...

TUGG

MY BROTHER!!

I AM AKAKABE YASOMA, RŌNIN FROM GAMŌ.

HE IS A DEAR FRIEND OF MINE.

HUH ?

UH...

FWOM

HUH?

SURELY, YOU'VE HEARD OF BAN DAN'EMON?

I'VE MET HIM ON THREE OR FOUR OCCASIONS.

ALSO, SUSUKIDA HAYATO KANESUKE, THE DISTINGUISHED OFFICER AT OSAKA CASTLE!!

WE TRAVELED THROUGHOUT THE LAND TOGETHER BACK IN OUR WANDERING DAYS.

UM...

AND YOU?

AND THEN THERE'S ONO SHURINOSUKE !!

THE CHŪJŌ-RYŪ.

HE'S FROM JŌKYŌJI VILLAGE IN ISAKA-NO-SHŌ IN THE PROVINCE OF ECHIZEN. HE'S THE MASTER OF THE--

YOU MUST HAVE HEARD OF...

...

TODA SEIGEN...

...

HE INCORPORATED THE CHŪJŌ STYLE INTO HIS OWN.

YOU MUST ALSO HAVE HEARD OF MASTER KANEMAKI JISAI...

THEN SURELY...

WELL...

KANEMAKI JISAI...SOUNDS FAMILIAR, BUT MAYBE NOT...

SO YOU STUDY SWORDSMANSHIP?

AND YOU ARE...?

THAT'S RIGHT.

KANEMAKI JISAI'S DISCIPLE, SASAKI KOJIRŌ...

!?

...I'M THE MAN DELIVERING SASAKI'S POSSESSIONS TO HIS FAMILY. THAT IS TO SAY.

Vagabond

(A MAN WHO LOOKS GOOD DRINKING LIQUOR)

#57 Vermin

UH...

FORGIVE ME!!

SASAKI KOJIRŌ, I HAD NO IDEA WHO YOU WERE... AND HERE I AM BOASTING AND SHOOTING MY MOUTH OFF...!!

I APOLOGIZE FOR MY INSOLENCE!

UMM...

WHAT?

IS THE NAME SO WELL-KNOWN?

I'M JUST AN INEXPER-IENCED YOUNG MAN...

I, UH...

ALL THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE WAY OF THE SWORD HAVE HEARD OF YOU...!!

SASAKI KOJIRŌ...

I DON'T KNOW MUCH OF WHAT'S BEING SAID IN THE WORLD.

YOUR NAME IS HEARD EVERYWHERE.

AND YET YOU ARE STILL UNEMPLOYED ?

THERE MUST BE PLENTY OF LORDS WHO'D HIRE YOU IMMEDIATELY.

NOW, WHAT DO I DO...?

AH... IT IS OFTEN SO FOR THOSE WITH TALENT...

YOUR MODESTY DOES NOTHING TO HIDE YOUR ABILITIES.

AN OUTCAST ?

...I'VE BEEN SORT OF AN OUTCAST.

WELL, YOU SEE... FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS...

UH-OH...

I MEAN, I'VE BEEN DEDICATING MY LIFE TO THE WAY OF THE SWORD.

OF COURSE ...

...A MAN WITH YOUR TALENTS..

SO YOU *DO* WISH TO BE HIRED?

I SEE...

OF COURSE ...

...EVENTUALLY I *WILL* HAVE TO FIND WORK.

ALLOW ME TO HELP YOU!

FWIP

HA HA HA HA

DEE DA DA

...

HM?

I'M SURE I WON'T BE PAID MUCH, INITIALLY.

THE MORE ABILITY YOU HAVE, THE MORE BOLD YOU SHOULD BE.

LET'S SEE...WE'LL ASK THEM FOR FIVE-HUNDRED KOKU.

ACTUALLY, I'M WONDERING WHAT'S FOR LUNCH.

...

DON'T SELL YOURSELF SHORT!

THAT'S NO GOOD, SASAKI!!

YOU'RE THE MIGHTY SASAKI KOJIRO!!

HA HA HA

AND THIS IS AN ADVANCE CELEBRATION !!

DRINK UP!

HA

FIVE-HUNDRED ...

THAT'S SUSUKIDA'S ESTATE.

WHEN HE WAS THIRTY, NO ONE HAD EVER HEARD OF SUSUKIDA KANESUKE...

BUT NOW, ALL THAT'S CHANGED...

...

...

HOW EXTRAVAGANT.

HE'S REALLY MADE A NAME FOR HIMSELF!!

...OSAKA.

THIS IS...

I'LL MAKE IT TOO, EVENTUALLY...!!

KRICH

ALL RIGHT THEN, I'LL GO TELL HIM ABOUT YOU!

OH...

I'LL NEED THAT MONEY.

I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU YASOMA.

OH, RIGHT!

I'LL HAVE TO GIVE IT TO THEM.

THE RECOMMEND-ATION FEE- IT'S A RECENTLY DEVELOPED CUSTOM.

IS THIS ENOUGH ?

YES, THAT SHOULD DO.

I'VE ALREADY USED SO MUCH OF IT. BUT *THIS* IS IMPORTANT...

...

I MEAN, WITH A REPUTATION LIKE YOURS!!

IT'S NOT A PROBLEM.

I'M USING SOMEONE ELSE'S NAME TO LAUNCH MY CAREER...

...BUT THIS IS JUST A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY.

KRICH

KRICH

OKAY, I'LL MEET YOU TOMORROW AT THE TAVERN!!

AND IN THE UNLIKELY CASE THAT SUSUKIDA REFUSES, I'LL JUST LEAVE WITHOUT GIVING HIM THE MONEY.

AND THEN I CAN STILL GO AND SEE PLENTY OF OTHER PEOPLE, LIKE ŌNO OR GOTŌ.

I *AM* GOING TO MAKE A NAME FOR MYSELF...!!

THAT'S RIGHT. I'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE MYSELF AS GREAT AS THE NAME I'M USING.

IT'S ALREADY BEEN THREE DAYS...

ACTUALLY, YES.

THERE MUST BE A REASON HE HASN'T COME.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

BUT YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR DAYS NOW.

YOU'VE BEEN HERE EVERY DAY, AND YOU JUST SIT THERE...

ARE YOU WAITING FOR SOMEONE ?

MAYBE NOBODY WANTED TO HIRE ME...

...

HE SAID HE WOULD FIND YOU A POSITION SOMEWHERE !?

HE STOLE YOUR MONEY!!

NO...

WHAT!?

THAT GUY!?

THAT'S THE RECOMMENDATION FEE I GAVE HIM--IT'S A RECENT CUSTOM.

HE DIDN'T *TAKE* MY MONEY.

WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT!?

OH MY! YOU'VE BEEN *HAD!*

WHAT'RE YOU SAYING !?

WHAT --!?

YOU WANNA BE DEALT IN?

HUH ?

NO.

CHATTER

HA HA

HA HA

CHATTER

I SEE.

HMM... AKAKABE?

HAVEN'T SEEN HIM AROUND LATELY.

I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY.

WHAT!?

HOLD ON...

EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T PLAY, YOU HAVE TO PAY YOUR ADMISSION FEE!!

I'M LOOKING FOR AKAKABE YASOMA

WAIT A MINUTE.

KRICH

WHAT!?

YOU MUST BE A THIEF, AFTER OUR MONEY!

YOU'RE BROKE AND YOU INTERRUPT OUR GAMBLING...

IS THAT TRUE!?

COME ON, DRAW YOUR SWORD!!

ANYONE SCARED OFF BY YOUR PATHETIC THREATS WILL NEVER MAKE IT HERE IN OSAKA!

C'MON, YOU PATHETIC BASTARD!!

I'LL C-CUT YOU DOWN!!

I'LL--

HA HA HA! AND YOU HAVE TO ANNOUNCE IT TO EVERYONE.

HEY!

HE'S GOING TO DRAW HIS SWORD!!

GO AHEAD AN' DO IT!!

WHO DO YOU THINK I AM!?

YOU... VERMIN!!

KRICH

...OF THE CHŪJŌ STYLE!!

I'M SASAKI KOJIRŌ...

SLISH

...!!

GASP!

ARRGH!

YASOMA!

HEY!

HE CUT ME!!

FWISH

FWISH

WAIT!

YOU TRICKED ME!!

YOU BASTARD...!!

WAIT!

KRICH

GIVE IT BACK!!

I WANT MY MONEY BACK!!

HOW DARE YOU TREAT ME LIKE A FOOL...!?

HOW DARE YOU TRICK ME!?

ALL RIGHT THEN...

I'M GETTING TIRED OF RUNNING.

HAH...

HUF

HUF

HUF

!!

AND I'M NOT SUCH A BAD SWORDSMAN MYSELF!!

I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU SAY.

CHAK

GIVE ME BACK MY MONEY!!

HMPH!

YOU WERE STUPID ENOUGH TO GIVE IT TO ME.

WHAT !?

SMIRK

BESIDES...

FSH

IF I DEFEAT THE *MIGHTY* SASAKI KOJIRŌ!!

I'LL MAKE QUITE A NAME FOR MYSELF...

YES, THAT'S WHAT I'LL DO!!

NOBODY WOULD KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.

I CAN JUST CALL MYSELF SASAKI KOJIRŌ!!

NO, WAIT... IF I KILL YOU...

FIRST YOU CHEAT ME, AND NOW YOU SAY YOU'LL KILL ME!?

Y-YOU BASTARD!!

SMIRK

...

FROM HERE ON...

THAT'S RIDICULOUS!! YOU BASTARD!!

AND YOU SAY YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE MY NAME!?

DAMN YOU!!

...

KOJIRŌ...

...OUR SWORDS WILL DO THE TALKING.

KOJIRŌ!

KRICH

...!!

ARE YOU *REALLY* SASAKI KOJIRŌ?

...!!

SHAKE

BRR

BRR

BRR

SHAKE

BRR

#58

Sasaki Kojirō

WAH HA HA HA!!

HA HA HA! YOU'RE TREMBLING WITH FEAR!!

MAYBE YOU'VE ALREADY BEATEN ME TO STEALING KOJIRO'S NAME!!

HMPH!

HA HA HA

YOU'RE JUST A MASTER OF BOASTING ABOUT YOURSELF!

SASAKI KOJIRO!

!?

WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT!?

...YOU'RE USING HIS NAME AND PASSING YOURSELF OFF AS HIM.

AFTER KILLING THE *REAL* SASAKI KOJIRŌ...

NO ONE WOULD EVER KNOW THE DIFERENCE...

ARE YOU CALLING ME AN IMPOSTOR!?

H-HOW DARE YOU!?

SMIRK

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

...

SWISH

YAHH!!

AHHH!!

WUMP

AFTER I KILL YOU, THAT IS.

...

I'LL BE THE *THIRD* SASAKI KOJIRŌ...

ALL RIGHT THEN...

UNH!!

KRICH

IT'S *MY* TURN TO USE THE NAME!!

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

I CANT DIE.

I HAVENT MADE ANYTHING OUT OF MY LIFE YET!!

I CANT LET THIS BASTARD KILL ME!!

I CANT...

THWAK

!

DAMN PIECE OF JUNK SWORD!!

!!

!!

YAHH!!

!!

THUD

INGHH!

SWISH

HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
AT LEAST YOU HAVE *SOME* STRENGTH...
BUT NOW, YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE A SWORD.
KRICH
HEH HEH...
WHUD
I CAN'T LOSE TO THIS BASTARD.
I JUST CAN'T...!!
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
HA HA HA!!
HA HA!

THWAK

THOK

THWAK

I'M FINALLY GOING TO BEAT YOU!!

FWOOSH

HUF.

HA HA!

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

THWUD!

NNGH!

THWAK!

!!

DAMN!!

GASP!

!!!!!

I USED THAT TREE ON PURPOSE.

COULDN'T YOU EVEN FIGURE THAT OUT?

YOU IDIOT.

IF THAT TREE WASN'T THERE, I WOULD HAVE WON.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FEEL BAD, MATAHACHI.

YOU'RE STRONG, TOO.

...THAT WASN'T NICE!

TAKEZO...

HUH?

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE IN THIS VILLAGE WHO CAN TAKE ON TAKEZO...

AND THAT'S *INCLUDING* THE ADULTS!

SOMETHING I KNOW I DON'T HAVE...

ONCE HE GETS HIS HAND ON A SWORD, HE BECOMES DIFFERENT. HE HAS SOMETHING UNIQUE.

OTSU...

I'M NOT AB-NORMAL.

HMPH.

UH-HUH.

THAT'S RIGHT, I'M *NOT* WEAK, AM I!?

HE'S JUST ABNORMAL.

...ONLY ME

NO ONE ELSE CAN DO THAT...

BUT I *AM* THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN TAKE HIM ON.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

TAKEZŌ...

HM?

HMPH.

SOMEHOW, THIS VERMIN DOESN'T SEEM AS IMPOSING ANYMORE...

SKUNK

SLISSH

I AM SASAKI KOJIRŌ!!

MUUU

HE'S BACK.

HMM...

HEY!

FSH

KRICH

HE'S ALONE...

KRICH

WHERE'S AKAKABE!?

THAT'S...

THAT'S AKAKABE'S SWORD...!!

...BY SASAKI KOJIRŌ?

ANYONE ELSE WANT TO BE CUT DOWN...

NO...

GASP...!!

KRICH

...

KRICH

KRICH

YOU CAN STAY AT OUR PLACE...

DO YOU HAVE A PLACE TO STAY TONIGHT?

WHAT ?

HUH?

EXCUSE ME...

SIR!!

WELL...

BUT IF WE HAVE A SAMURAI LIKE YOU STAYING AT OUR PLACE, THEN THEY WON'T COME NEAR US.

OF COURSE, WE WON'T CHARGE YOU.

WOULD YOU DO US THE HONOR...?

AS YOU CAN SEE, THIS AREA IS OVERRUN WITH RUFFIANS AND THUGS.

THEY LIVE ON WHAT LITTLE SAKE, MONEY, AND FOOD THEY CAN GET THEIR HANDS ON...

...AND THEY'RE ALSO AFTER THE WOMEN HERE.

WE JUST CAN'T SLEEP SAFE AT NIGHT.

!!

....

SURE, IF YOU THINK I CAN BE OF ANY HELP...

...

OH, KOJIRO...

...NOW

Vagabond

CHAVE YOU EVER EATEN ANTS? I HAVE...)

MANCH

#59 Hōzōin Pickles

MNCH

MNCH

MNCH

MNCH

MNCH

MNCH

HMM...

...BUT THIS YEAR'S PICKLES ARE ASTOUNDING, MASTER INEI.

MNCH

MNCH

MNCH

DELICIOUS!!

MNCH

I LOOK FORWARD TO THE HOZOIN PICKLES EVERY YEAR...

MNCH

MNCH

HMM...

OF COURSE, THEY *TASTE* WONDERFUL...

THERE HE GOES, THE SYCOPHANT.

HMPH...

MNCH

MNCH

WE PICKLE THEM THE WAY YOU TAUGHT US...

...BUT THEY NEVER TURN OUT LIKE YOURS!!

ONLY YOU CAN MAKE PICKLES LIKE THIS!

...BUT I AM PARTICULARLY MOVED BY HOW THEY WERE MADE.

YOU GREW THE VEGETABLES YOURSELF, ON THE SOIL THAT YOU PLOWED.

AND EVERY YEAR, YOU SHARE THE FRUITS OF YOUR LABOR WITH US.

I AM MOST MOVED.

YOUR BLATANT FLATTERY IS SO TRANSPARENT...

MNCH

MNCH

YES.

SNIF

SNIF

I, YOUR MOST FAITHFUL DISCIPLE, MYOEI, AND EVERYONE ELSE HERE, ALL FEEL THE SAME WAY.

SNIFFLE

...DON'T *YOU* HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT...

...OUR MASTER'S KINDNESS?

MASTER INSHUN...

ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH YOU?

MASTER INSHUN ...

YOU'VE BEEN IN A DAZE EVER SINCE YOUR FIGHT WITH THAT MIYAMOTO FELLOW.

HMPH!

...TOO SALTY.

MNCH

...PERHAPS YOU DON'T *DESERVE* TO BE THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER OF HŌZŌIN...

IF *THAT* WAS ENOUGH TO WEAR YOU OUT...

!!

MNCH

...YOU'RE OVER-STEPPING YOUR PLACE.

MYOEI...

THEY FEEL THEY'VE BEEN OVERTAKEN BY SOMEONE YOUNGER THAN THEY ARE

THESE MEN CAN'T ACCEPT THAT INSHUN'S THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER.

DID IT REALLY WEAR YOU OUT *THIS* MUCH?

HMM...

INCH

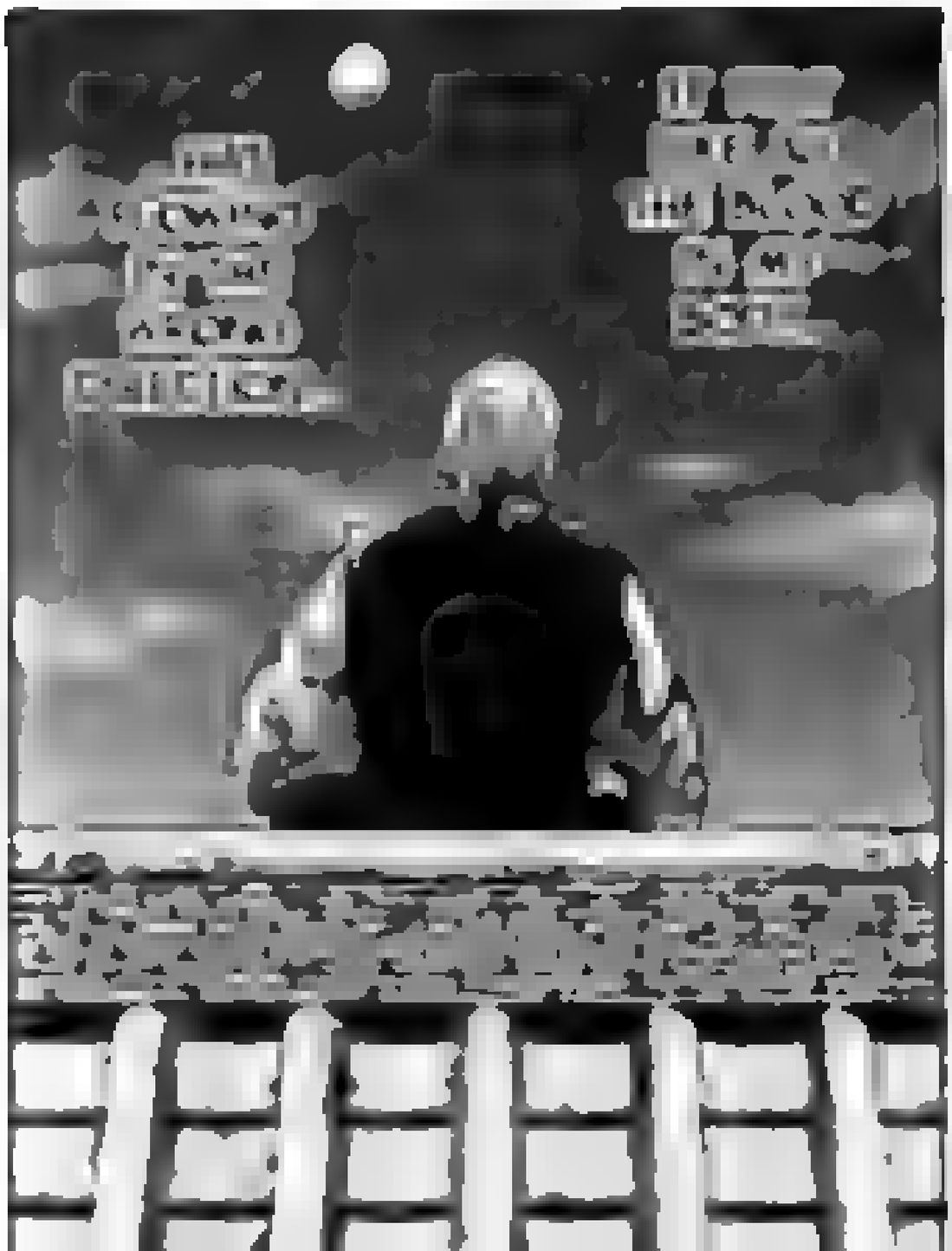
INCH

IT *WAS* A HARD AND BITTER BATTLE...

...BUT YOU WON.

THAT FIGHT WITH MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...

...



FWOOSH

I'M NOT GONNA LOSE.

YAHH!!

FWOOSH

!!

HMM

BORED.

INSHUN IS FINISHED.

THAT'S HOW INSHUN IS NOW.

HE'LL NEVER REGAIN HIS SPIRIT.

...AFTER A CRITICAL FIGHT OR BATTLE...

THEY'RE JUST COMPLETELY SPENT.

I'VE SEEN MANY FIGHTERS LOSE THEIR SPIRIT...

THAT'S HOW IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN THE FIRST PLACE...

SO INSHUN'S DONE

HA HA HA!

I THOUGHT HE MIGHT AT LEAST ACT MORE ALERT IN FRONT OF MASTER INEI...

HMM...

MYÖEI, *YOU'LL* BE THE NEXT MASTER OF HÖZÖIN!

I THOUGHT HE RAN BACK TO HIS HOME VILLAGE...

BUT DID YOU HEAR WHAT HAPPENED TO MIYAMTO MUSASHI?

HUH?

SUPPOSEDLY, HE'S IN THE MOUNTAINS OF KASUGA.

WHAT!? THAT'S RIGHT HERE.

WHAT!?

AND HE'S RIGOROUSLY TRAINING TO DEFEAT INSHUN.

AND...

...MASTER IN'EI IS THE ONE WHO'S TRAINING HIM.

IS THAT TRUE?

SMIRK

!!

FWIP

!!

THUNK

NNGH!

!!

URGH!

FWAAS

HEY!

WHAT'RE YOU--!?

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND!?

HMM...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE MASTER'S UP TO...

YOU--

BASTARD!!

FWOOSH

HUYAAH!!

THUNK

NNGH!

...BUT MUSASHI **STILL** WANTS TO FIGHT ME!?

THAT'S WHAT IVE BEEN WAITING FOR!!

THUNK

THUD

ARGH!

!!

YOU LITTLE BASTARD!!

FWOOSH

KIAK

YAHH!!

...

YOU'RE TOO SLOW.

YAHH!!

THE END

SOMEONE BRING ME AN INKSTONE!!

AND A BRUSH AND SOME PAPER!!

KRICH

GRPP

A MESSAGE FROM INSHUN

MUSASHI...

...

HE'S COMING...

About the Author

VAGABOND was created by Takehiko Inoue, author of the best selling manga *SLAM DUNK*, with over 100 million copies in print worldwide. For his work on *VAGABOND*, Inoue received the 2000 Media Arts award for Manga from the Japanese Ministry of Culture as well as the 2000 Kodansha Award for best manga. Most recently in 2002, Inoue's *VAGABOND* received the prestigious Tezuka award for best manga. To date, *VAGABOND* has sold well over 22 million copies throughout the world. In addition to his numerous manga titles, Inoue also created the character designs for the PlayStation basketball game, *ONE ON ONE*.

About *VAGABOND* and *Miyamoto Musashi*

Takehiko Inoue's *VAGABOND*, based on Eiji Yoshikawa's novel *MUSASHI*, is a fictional account of the life of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). The historical figure Miyamoto Musashi, author of the philosophical strategy guide *A BOOK OF FIVE RINGS*, was a master of the sword and was revered as a "sword-saint." He founded the Niten Ichi style of sword fighting which is typified by fighting with both long and short swords at once, holding the long sword with the right hand and the short sword with the left. Musashi was also a master of the "gentler arts"—he was a master of *sumi-e* (black ink drawings), metalworking, and woodcarving. The films, *THE SAMURAI TRILOGY*, directed by Hiroshi Inagaki and starring Toshiro Mifune were also based on Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*. Perhaps inspired by the huge success of *VAGABOND* in Japan, in 2003, NHK produced the historical period drama, *MUSASHI*. Also based on Yoshikawa's novel, this drama stars kabuki actor Shinnosuke Ichikawa as Musashi and TV star Ryoko Yonekura as Otsu.

Glossary and Extraneous Background Information

Hozoin Spear Technique
Created by the Buddhist monk Kakuzenbo Hoin In'ei (1521-1607) of Hozoin Temple which was a sub-temple of Kofukuji Temple in Nara. This spear technique is typified by quick dexterous movements rather than the use of brute force.

Ito Ittosai (Dates unknown)
Founder of the Itto-ryu, one of the largest schools of sword fighting. Before establishing his own style, Ittosai is said to have studied a variant of the Chujo-ryu style of sword fighting under Kanemaki Jisai's instruction.

koku
Approximately 5.1 U.S. bushels or 180.39 liters. Samurai were paid their stipends in bushels of rice. One *koku* was a standard measure representing the approximate amount rice necessary to feed one man for one year.

Sasaki Kojiro
The legendary archrival of Miyamoto Musashi. Kojiro is believed to have studied the Chujo-ryu style of swordsmanship under the instruction of either Toda Seigen or Kanemaki Jisai. Kojiro was renowned for his *Tsubame-gaeshi*, or "swallow cut" technique, inspired by the movement of a swallow in flight.

The Sengoku Period and the Battle of Sekigahara
The Warring States or *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weaker and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous *daimyo* (domainal lords). Looking to expand their spheres of control, the *daimyo* were constantly at war with each other. One *daimyo* in particular, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly successful, by the time of his assassination in 1582, he managed to control approximately one-third of all of Japan. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry on the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating an orderly federation amongst the *daimyo*, and by 1590, order was restored to Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the *daimyo* from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its five-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, leading the major *daimyo* from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600) in Mino (located in present day Gifu Prefecture) where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would rule Japan for the next 250 years.

Takuan Soho (1573-1645)
A monk of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, by the time Takuan was 37, he was appointed abbot of the leading Rinzai sect temple, Daitokuji. Takuan was an important figure whose acute and brutally honest advice was sought by influential and powerful figures such as Emperor Go Mizuno and the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu. His correspondence to Yagyu Munenori discussing Zen and swordsmanship entitled *THE UNFETTERED MIND* has become an influential treatise in both the areas of philosophy and martial arts. The pickled daikon radish, *takuan*, also bears his name.

The Yagyu Clan
Yagyu Muneyoshi Sekishusai (1527-1606) was the founder of the famed Yagyu-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyu Munenori (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key generals at the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan and in 1632 the Yagyu were appointed as the *ometsuke*—responsible for the surveillance of the *daimyo*. Although the Yagyu clan has been depicted in Kazuo Koike's *LONE WOLF AND CUB* as the plotters of the downfall of Itto Ogami, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyu Clan is more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyu Jubei (1607-1650), is viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evil-doers.

Yoshioka Kempo (dates unknown)
A distinguished warrior during the *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) and the founder of the renowned Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Yoshioka Kempo mastered the Kyohachi style of swordmanship and then modified it to form the Yoshioka style. In the context of Inoue's *VAGABOND* as well as in Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*, Yoshioka Seijuro and Denshichiro are Kempo's sons who are historically thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi on numerous occasions.

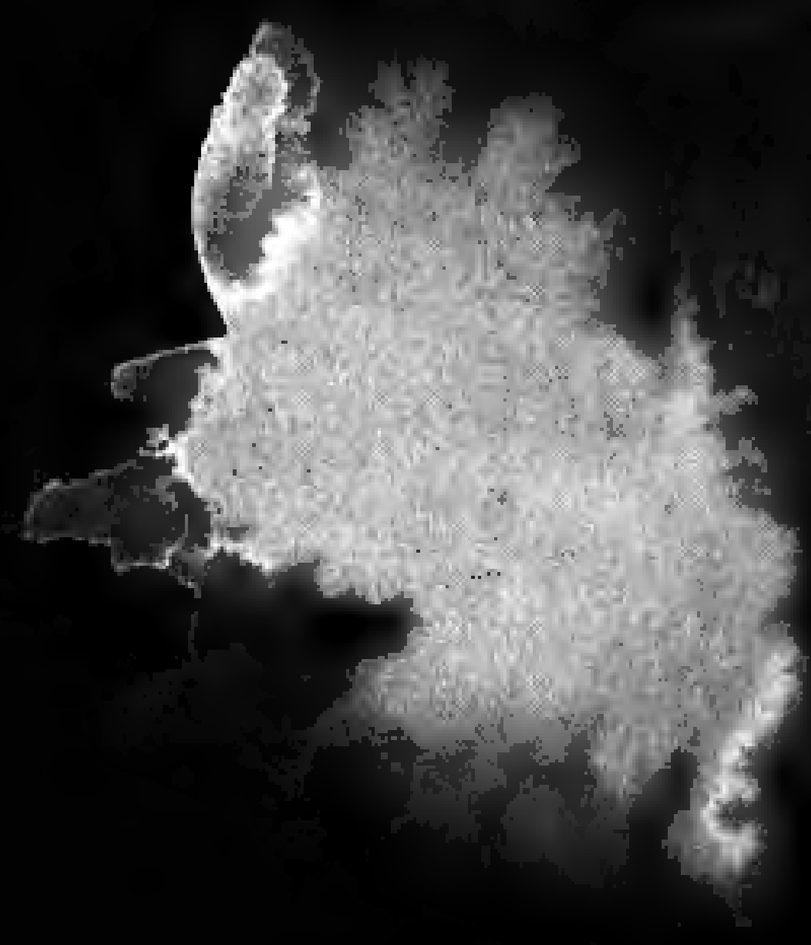
This is the LAST page of this comic!

VAGABOND has been printed to read from **right** to **left** in its original Japanese format—presenting Takehiko Inoue's dynamic artwork the way it was meant to be seen!

When most Japanese comics are published in English, a mirror image of the original artwork is printed in order to accommodate the left to right reading orientation of English. For this reason, errors in continuity occasionally occur and characters who were originally right-handed suddenly become left-handed. In order to present manga in its purest form, *VAGABOND* is being printed to read from right to left. This way, kimono are worn with the left side over the right and the samurai's long and short swords are carried on the **left** side, the way they were traditionally worn.

To properly enjoy *VAGABOND*, start from the other end of this comic and read from right to left.

A note on names: The names presented within the context of this comic are presented in the traditional Japanese order—surname, followed by first name. "Miyamoto" is Miyamoto Musashi's last name and "Musashi" is his first name. The name of the creator of *VAGABOND*, however, has been presented first name first, last name second. "Takehiko" is the author's first name and "Inoue" is his last name.



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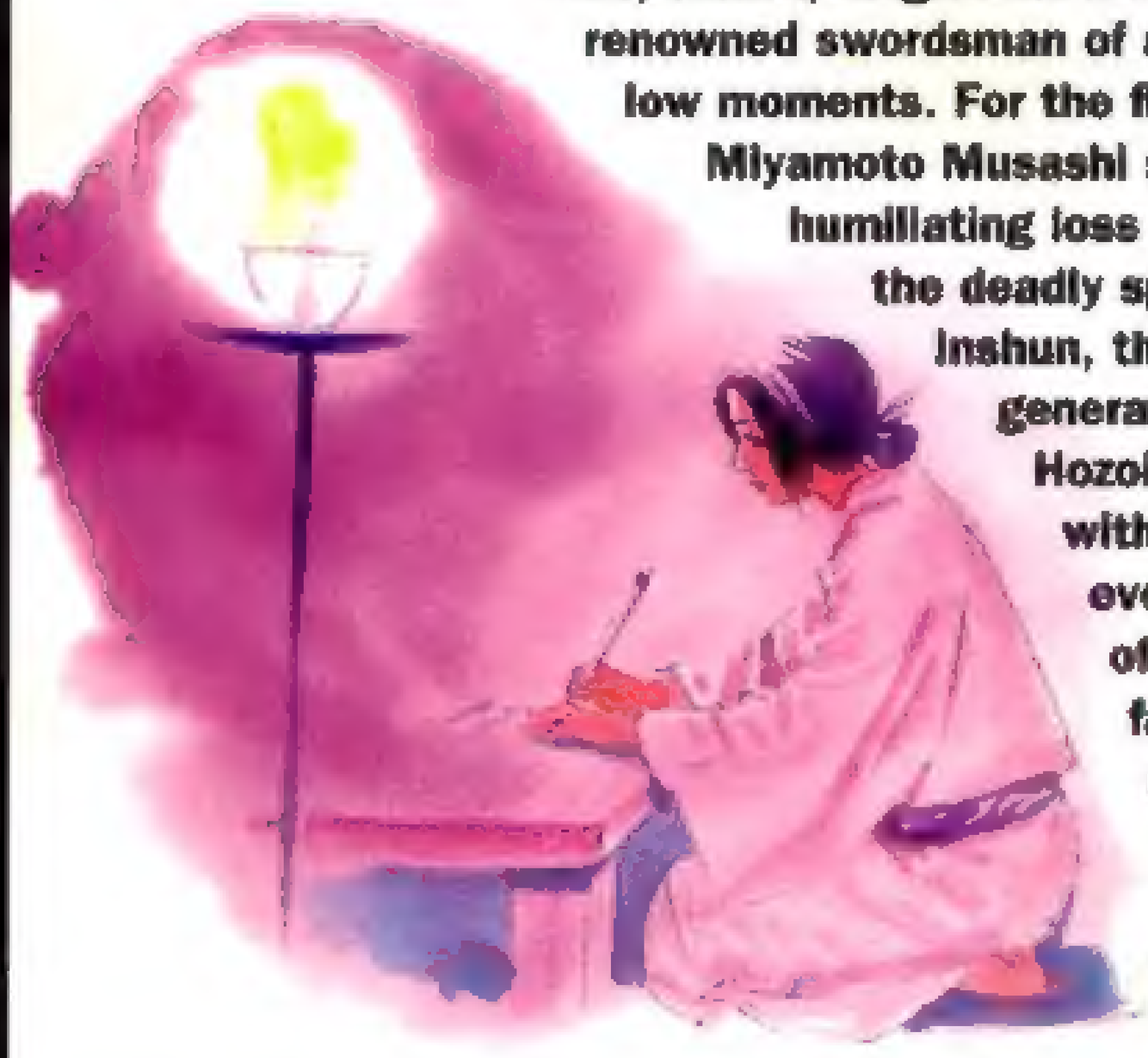

Fear, failure, disgrace... Even the most renowned swordsman of all time had his low moments. For the first time ever, Miyamoto Musashi suffers a humiliating loss when he takes on the deadly spear technique of Inshun, the second-generation master of Hozoin Temple. Dealing with defeat can be even more daunting of a task than facing the fiercest of warriors. Will Musashi be up for his latest challenge?

This book reads from right to left.

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